



# Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale



Mike Nolan

## Habitats

Humpback whale breeding, calving, & nursing grounds

Coral reefs

Sandy substrate

## Key Species

Humpback whale

Spinner dolphin

Hawaiian monk seal

False killer whale

Green sea turtle

Reef fish

Coral

## The Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary

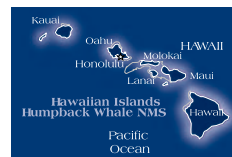
lies within the shallow (less than 600 feet), warm waters surrounding the main Hawaiian Islands and constitutes one of the world's most important humpback whale habitats. Scientists estimate that two-thirds of the entire North Pacific humpback whale population migrate to Hawaiian waters each winter to engage in breeding, calving, and nursing activities. Through education, outreach, research and cultural activities, the sanctuary strives to protect humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i. This continued protection is crucial to the long-term recovery of this endangered species.

## Research Activities

The sanctuary serves as a laboratory for natural scientists seeking to better understand Hawai'i's marine resources. The sanctuary supports whale research and monitoring projects such as SPLASH (Structure of Populations, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpback Whales), a multi-year, international cooperative effort to understand the population structure of humpback whales across the North Pacific, and to assess the status, trends and potential human impacts to this population.

## Education Activities

Outreach and education programs and projects are conducted to foster awareness of sanctuary resources and to promote ocean stewardship. Information about humpback whales and their habitat in Hawai'i is made available to the public through educator and student workshops, community lectures, shore-based whale watches, volunteer and naturalist training sessions, and sanctuary publications. On Maui, the sanctuary education center in Kihei is a beach-front facility with year-round exhibits and programs.



**Location**  
Within the 100-fathom isobath in the four-island area of Maui; Penguin Bank, and off the north shore of Kauai, the north and south shores of Oahu, and Kohala coastline off the Big Island.

**Protected Area**  
1,370-square miles

**Designation**  
November 1992

**Communication**  
Maui Headquarters Office  
(808) 879-2818  
1-800-831-4888 (toll free)  
O'ahu Office  
(808) 397-2651  
1-888-55-WHALE (toll free)  
Kauai Office  
(808) 246-2860  
Kona Office  
(808) 327-3697  
State Office  
(808) 587-0106

**E-mail:**  
[hiihumpbackwhale@noaa.gov](mailto:hiihumpbackwhale@noaa.gov)

**Web page:**  
[hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov](http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov)

Above: A mother and calf humpback whale; left to right: breaching whale; Sanctuary Ocean Count volunteers; diving humpback whale



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